

June 2022 Vol. 6 Issue 6  
A monthly publication for members of  
MiEnergy Cooperative.

# MiNews

## Spring heat wave has electric industry prepping

What you need to know about MISO, the grid and possible Max Gen events

## 70 local students receive scholarships

## NEW WAYS TO USE ELECTRICITY

## SAFETY TIPS Before, during & after storms

The magic of the electric power grid is the precise balance it must maintain between the amount of electricity generated to the needs of consumers. MiEnergy's wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative, has employees working 24/7 with the Midcontinent Independent System Operator to ensure this balance. ©Dairyland Power Cooperative



## Updated strategic initiatives

This spring, MiEnergy's board of directors approved our cooperative's strategic initiatives that include support of community and member engagement, enhancement of safety, maintaining of our financial performance, managing cybersecurity risk and exposure, pursuing growth opportunities, and forging partnerships for the betterment of the membership.

The board approved an updated mission statement:

*We take care of our members by safely providing reliable, affordable and sustainable services.*

MiEnergy has consistently taken the approach that we can always work to do better. In 2021, we had no lost time accidents, and our safety work metrics have seen consistent improvement. Our retail electric rates have been stable and in December the board approved a special \$1 million refund to the membership. Our reliability metrics have been solid, yet we have seen steady improvement with the increased investments in tree trimming and regular work plan investments in our distribution system. Our electric distribution system is reliable, despite the occasional wrath of Mother Nature.

We have also gained efficiency through the use of technology and workplace succession planning. We started MiEnergy with a workforce of 87 employees, and today, we have 75 including an additional information technology employee, an in-house electrician and two additional lineworkers. We have also transitioned from a board of directors of 14 to 11, as part of the original MiEnergy governance plans incorporated in our bylaws.

Sustainability has consistently been a specific focus of the membership. Membership surveys over the years have revealed that members support renewable energy while equally supporting reliability and affordability. MiEnergy has supported an "all of the above" energy portfolio to balance reliability, affordability and environmental stewardship. Yet, we have specifically leveraged our renewable energy opportunities.

At the end of 2021, **MiEnergy's energy generation resources capacity tallied 39% from renewable energy resources.** In 2021, the United States Department of Energy projected our nation's electric utilities could obtain 42% of their generation resources from renewables by 2035. This is truly a role for MiEnergy that identifies with our vision statement to be a leader and our mission statement for sustainability.

MiEnergy has supported members' interest in installing distributed generation. Our retail electric rates are structured to ensure all members of the cooperative – those with solar and those without – pay the same basic service delivery costs. Our NOVA Power Portal makes signup and interconnection very manageable. In response, our members have installed over **730 individual systems totaling 13 megawatts (MW)** (13,000 kilowatts) of solar generation.

In 2021, MiEnergy commissioned **9 MW of utility-scale solar as part of Fillinona Solar** at four locations near substations in our service territory that could accommodate the added solar generation. This partnership with OneEnergy provides local renewable energy and annual wholesale power savings of over \$300,000.

In 2020, MiEnergy partnered with **Reicks View Farms on a 665 kW solar** project. We joined with neighboring electric cooperatives Freeborn-Mower Electric Cooperative and People's Energy on the **600 kW Minnesota Three** project in Oronoco along Highway 52 in 2014. That same year, MiEnergy was also one of the first electric cooperatives in the United States to undertake **co-op-owned community solar projects, Renewable Rays**, utilizing solar tax credits with a partner as a not-for-profit cooperative.

Dairyland Power Cooperative compliments our sustainability, affordability and reliability mission with a generation portfolio of 22% wind/solar, 38% natural gas, 37% coal and 1% hydroelectric/small biomass facilities. In 2019, they formed a partnership to bring **Madison Solar, a 1.5 MW array**, online in MiEnergy's service territory between Ridgeway and Decorah. Dairyland is responsible for our dispatchable generation in the MISO power pool and our power supply demands. Last month, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) held a press event that outlined their 2022 Summer Reliability Assessment and heightened electric reliability risks this summer warning that several parts of North America are at an elevated or high risk of energy shortfalls over the summer. Our northern region of MISO was at an elevated risk.

Today, many utilities are aggressively moving to wind and solar generation to replace baseload resources. The ongoing energy transition must recognize the need for time, technology development and to be inclusive of all energy



# SCHOLARSHIPS

## MiEnergy awards \$70,000 in scholarships 70 local students demonstrate commitment to community

MiEnergy Cooperative awarded \$70,000 in scholarships to 70 local high school students who exemplify commitment to their local community. MiEnergy's scholarship program reflects the core cooperative principle of commitment to community by recognizing high school seniors who demonstrate cooperative spirit through service to others. The scholarships are funded through unclaimed capital credits that would otherwise be turned over to the state. A video of the award winners can be viewed on the cooperative's website, MiEnergy.coop, and its social media pages. This year's 2022 MiEnergy Cooperative Community Service Scholarship winners are as follows:

**Aquinas:** Ellie E. Kath, child of Tony and Rebecca Kath.

**Caledonia:** Sasha McLees, child of Jeanne Buros; Grace Myhre, child of Francis and Heather Myhre; Brianna Stemper, child of Dan and Maria Stemper; Lillian M. Doyle, child of Patrick and Joleen Doyle; Sadie Treptow, child of Justin and Kristie Treptow; Amber Stemper, child of Michael and Susan Stemper.

**Chatfield:** Lauren Elizabeth Cole, child of Robert and Debra Cole; Zayda Thieke Priebe, child of Ryan and Amanda Priebe.

**Cotter:** Alessia Maria Velasquez Nitti, child of Christina Uribe Nitti and Jose Uribe Mardones.

**Crestwood:** Chance Everett-Charles Carter, child of Kevin and Julie Carter; Emily Grayce Voyna, child of Scott and Jeanne Voyna; Lyli Kunert, child of Justin and Lacey Newell and the late Joseph Kunert.

**Decorah:** Melia Kruse, child of Joel and Patty Kruse; Ashley Schneberger, child of Dennis and Charity Schneberger; Drew White, child of Jason and Bridget White; Abby Halverson, child of Tracy Halverson and Chad Halverson; Sage Katherine Wedmann, child of Bill Wedmann and Kelly Sorenson; Emily Grace Carolan, child of Jason and Sherri Carolan; Cassidy Rae Steines, child of Benjamin and Stephanie Steines.

**Houston:** Ethan Hargrove, child of Seth and Renae Hargrove; Maci Woodard, child of Josh and Jamie Woodard; Calley A. Colsch, child of Tim Colsch and Karla Colsch; Caden Charles Ness, child of Kimberly Ness; Karalee Christensen, child of Alan and Karen Christensen; Therese Jore, child of Doug and Mary Jore.

**Kingsland:** Isaac Hauser, child of Steve and Amy Hauser.

**LaCrescent-Hokah:** Lydia Rosendahl, child of Kevin and Paula Rosendahl.

**Lanesboro:** Ella Jane Cambern, child of Darrin Cambern; Brielle Ruen, Carson Ruen, Adam Ruen, children of Eric and Kristi Ruen.

**LeRoy-Ostrander:** Anna Dru Welsh, Kylie Jo Welsh, children of Melanie and Mike Welsh.

**Lewiston-Altura:** Melanie Wardwell, child of Garrett and Carlyn Wardwell; Elise Marie Sommer, child of Chad Sommer and Sarah Sommer; Emma Marie Mueller, child of Andrew Mueller and Carman Mueller; Matthew Schell, child of Robert and Shelly Schell; Anna Christine Hennessy, child of Joel and Jodi Hennessy; Katelyn Ketchum, child of Mike and Mary Ketchum; Anissa Neu, child of Tim and Jenn Neu.

**Mabel-Canton:** Emily Ann Carolan, child of Jarad and Wendy Carolan.

**New Hampton:** Bailey Kriener, child of Sally and Lyle Kriener; Chloe Reicherts, child of Jason and Tori Reicherts; Zachary Utley, child of Tony and Jennifer Utley.

**Onalaska Luther:** Madelynn Carol Marie Crabtree, child of Joseph and Diann Crabtree; Rachel Mae Koenig, child of Byron and Holly Koenig; Evan Erdman, child of Jason and Rita Erdman; Faithe Rupprecht, child of Kyle and Mandy Rupprecht; Kayleigh Anderson, child of Jeremy and Amber Anderson.

**Riceville:** Mitchel Marr, child of Mike and Sherry Marr.

**Rushford-Peterson:** Olivia Thompson, child of Brian and Jenny Thompson; Malachi Bunke, child of Nikki Bunke and Andy McManimon; Brienne Papenfuss, child of Brian and Bridget Papenfuss; Emarie Jacobson, child of Ryan and Leah Jacobson.

**Spring Grove:** Marah Jean Mathison, child of Dean and Kristy Mathison; Ashlyn Hammel, child of Michael and Kelli Hammel.

**St. Charles:** Carter Mathison, child of Mike and Melissa Mathison.

**South Winneshiek:** Shaun Klimesh, child of Corey and Lynette Klimesh; Janessa Kay Zweibahmer, child of Jason and Marilyn Zweibahmer; Jenna Sadler, child of Sam and Leanne Sadler; Holly Jane Schmitt, child of Greg and Sara Schmitt.

**Stewartville:** Nicole Brianna Schultz, child of Kevin and Kim Schultz; Samantha Feine, child of Eric and Kim Feine; Dyllon Lohmann, child of Karri and Eric Lohmann.

**Turkey Valley:** Jalyssa Blazek, child of Don and Kim Blazek; Josie Mai Weber, child of Jeremy and Teresa Weber; Garrett Bradlee Kurtenbach, child of Craig and Jenn Kurtenbach.

**Van Meter:** Dustin J. Barth, child of Dan and Amy Barth.

**Winona:** Andrew Robert Wooden, child of Edward and Kelly Wooden.

### Board room highlights | May 26, 2022

- CFO Hove provided a favorable financial report for April.
- Discussed the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) generation capacity shortfall for the summer.
- System Forester Josh Mitchell presented an update on the vegetation management program.
- CEO Krambeer provided updates on subsidiary businesses.

The next board meeting will be held at the Cresco office on June 30 at 9 a.m.



# New ways to use electricity



If you listen carefully, you can hear a quiet transformation happening. Electric appliances and equipment are becoming more popular than ever among consumers.

Advancements in technology and battery power coupled with decreasing costs are winning over consumers looking for comparable utility and versatility. A bonus is that use of electric equipment is quieter and better for the environment.

Inside the home, consumers and homebuilders alike are turning to electric appliances to increase energy efficiency and savings. Whether a traditional electric stove or an induction stove top, both are significantly more efficient than a gas oven. That's because conventional residential cooking tops typically use gas or resistance heating elements to transfer energy with efficiencies of approximately 32% and 75% respectively (according to ENERGY STAR®). Electric induction stoves, which cook food without any flame, will reduce indoor air pollution and can bring water to a boil about twice as fast as a gas stove. Robotic vacuums are also gaining in popularity. Fortune Business Insights attributes the growth and popularity of robotic vacuums like Roomba to a larger market trend of smart home technology and automation (think Alexa directing a Roomba to vacuum).

More tools and equipment with small gas-powered motors are being replaced with electric ones that include plug-in batteries. In the past few years, technology in battery storage has advanced significantly. Hand-held tools with plug-in batteries can hold a charge longer and offer the user the same versatility and similar functionality as gas-powered tools. For DIYers and those in the building trades, national brands such as Makita, Ryobi and Milwaukee offer electric versions of their most popular products like drills, saws, sanders and other tools. In addition to standard offerings, consumers can now purchase a wider array of specialty tools that plug-in such as power inverters, air inflators and battery chargers.

Keith Dennis, an energy industry expert and president of the Beneficial Electrification League notes that, "A few years back, the list of new electric product categories that were making their way to the market was limited—electric scooters, lawn mowers, leaf blowers and vehicles."

Today, the number of electric products available is exploding. "There are electric bikes, school buses, pressure washers, utility terrain vehicles, backhoes—even airplanes and boats," says Dennis. "With the expansion of batteries and advancements in technology, we are seeing almost anything that burns gasoline or diesel as having an electric replacement available on the market."

A case in point is the increased use of electric-powered tools and equipment, with more national brands offering a wider selection including lawn mowers, leaf blowers, string trimmers and snow blowers. The quality of zero- or low-emissions lawn equipment is also improving.

Electric equipment also requires less maintenance, and often the biggest task is keeping them charged. In addition, electric equipment is quieter so if you want to listen to music or your favorite podcast while performing outdoor work, you can; something that wouldn't be possible with gas-powered equipment. On the horizon, autonomous lawn mowers (similar to the robotic vacuum cleaners) will be seen dotting outdoor spaces.

Another benefit of using electric appliances or equipment is that by virtue of being plugged into the grid, the environmental performance of electric devices

improves over time. In essence, electricity is becoming cleaner through increased renewable energy generation, so equipment that uses electricity will have a diminishing environmental impact over time. Quite a hat trick—improving efficiency, quality of life and helping the environment.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

## IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

Electricity is becoming cleaner every day and can save consumers money on their energy costs over time.



### Did you know...

By switching your **lawn mower and yard equipment to electric**, you will **eliminate exhaust fumes, excessive noise**, and the gas can.<sup>1</sup>



### Did you know...

**Electric induction stoves**, which cook food without any flame, **will reduce indoor air pollution**, and can bring water to a boil about twice as fast as a gas stove.<sup>2</sup>



### Did you know...

**Electric vehicles are fun to drive**. They accelerate smoothly and **generate more torque** than gas vehicles.<sup>3</sup>



## Personnel changes at the co-op



### RETIREMENT

Dennis LeFebvre retired from MiEnergy on May 3 as journeyman foreman, Caledonia outpost. He has worked for the cooperative since

May 1987 as apprentice lineworker, moving to the Caledonia location as a journeyman. Thanks to Dennis for his 35 years of dedicated service.



### PROMOTION

Randall Ashbacher accepted the position of journeyman foreman for Caledonia District 2. Randall has been with the co-op for 32 years as a journeyman lineworker.



### NEW EMPLOYEE

Chris Horn accepted the position of journeyman lineworker and started his new position on May 9. Chris previously worked for People's Energy Cooperative in Oronoco as a journeyman lineworker and brings with him experience and familiarity

with the MiEnergy territory since he is originally from the LaCrescent area. We welcome Chris to MiEnergy Cooperative.

# 4 GRAND KIDS 2 YEARS FROM RETIREMENT 35 FEET IN THE AIR



**BUT RIGHT NOW IT'S YOU I'M WORRIED ABOUT.**

**HIS JOB IS DANGEROUS ENOUGH.**

When you see utility crews at work, slow down and move over. You have the power to protect a life.



**MOVE OVER SLOW DOWN**

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# May heatwave exposes grid vulnerabilities

## Utilities managed by MISO prep for rolling blackout situations

As we awaited the official start to summer, a mid-May heatwave hit MiEnergy’s service territory. Dormant air conditioners weren’t the only things being put to the test as record heat melted the region.

The regional electric grid, managed by MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator) for all electric utilities in its footprint, was strained with high electricity demand and limited generation resources. On May 12, MISO declared a Maximum Generation (Max Gen) Warning. MISO uses Max Gen procedures to help address grid constraints. In some circumstances, system conditions during a Max Gen scenario will call for abrupt electricity demand reduction measures, such as the use of our energy management programs. On May 12, MiEnergy worked closely with our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative, to be prepared in case there was a need to reduce our cooperative’s electricity demand.

“Although there was no call [from MISO] to shed load outside of normal daily energy management programs,

plans were being put in place to reduce demand if needed,” said Ben Porath, Dairyland Power Cooperative’s Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. “Depending on the weather and available generation resources, we could have quickly advanced to a Max Gen Event and, possibly, needed to implement our load management resources to achieve load reduction.”

“Every Max Gen Warning or Event scenario is unique. We must react to emergency grid conditions in a real-time manner and may have to call upon our members to start reducing their electricity demand at a moment’s notice,” said Brian Krambeer, MiEnergy’s president/CEO. “Using our energy management programs for this purpose ensures we can quickly reduce demand to avoid overloading generation resources. This is different than non-emergency peak alert events which help avoid purchasing power during the most expensive times of the summer or winter. Using energy management for Max Gen purposes supports grid reliability by reducing our electricity demand to levels

that can be met by available generation resources. If demand exceeds what the grid can fulfill, rolling blackouts can occur.”

Experiencing a Max Gen Warning so early in the season could be a sign of things to come. A press release from MISO in late April and the short-term outlook from the U.S. Energy Information Administration this spring, warn of an expected shortage of available generation resources during peak electricity demand this summer.

### SOME KEY REASONS FOR THE PROJECTED SHORTFALL INCLUDE:

- Higher, volatile natural gas prices in the United States.
- Coal-fired and nuclear power plant retirements outpacing the installation of new generation resources.
- A significant amount of new

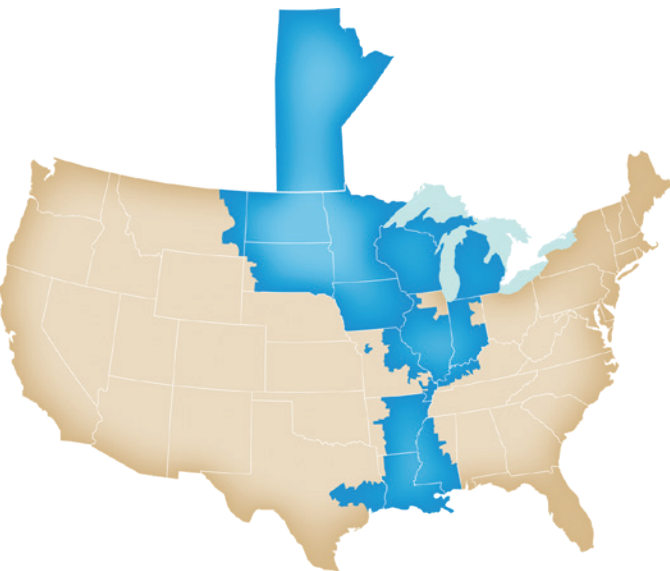
generation resources coming online are wind and solar, which are intermittent and not always available when needed.

- Electricity consumption continues to return to pre-COVID-19 pandemic patterns, increasing in the commercial and industrial sectors.

JT Smith, MISO’s executive director – market operations, said a 2022 seasonal assessment indicates about a 5-gigawatt (GW) deficit between an expected peak forecast of 124 GW vs. 119 GW of expected “regularly available generation.” For comparison, 1 GW is 1,000 megawatts (MW) of power or 1 million kilowatts (kW), which is approximately the size of the entire Dairyland Power system. Dairyland’s 24 member cooperatives serve 284,000 homes and businesses in a four-state region.

This deficit leaves MISO’s North and Central regions – the regions where Dairyland’s member cooperatives serve – at an increased risk of rolling blackouts to help keep the grid online.

Dairyland runs annual drills with its members to prepare for a potential rolling blackout event. To-date, load reduction measures have not reached the point of load shedding – including during the February 2021 Polar Vortex where Texas and other states did endure



MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator) is an independent, not-for-profit, member-based organization responsible for operating the power grid across 15 U.S. states and the Canadian province of Manitoba (pictured in blue). Approximately 42 million people depend on MISO to generate and transmit the right amount of electricity every minute of every day. In addition to managing the power grid within our region, MISO administers the buying and selling of electricity, and partners with members and stakeholders to plan the grid of the future.

## Summer Shift, Peak Alert, Max Gen

### What is the difference and what should you do?

After reading the article at the left, it may leave you wondering how Max Gen fits in with other programs and alerts MiEnergy communicates and what the difference is between them. Here is a breakdown of each:

#### SUMMER SHIFT

The Summer Shift is an annual seasonal campaign to help the cooperative avoid high electric use time periods. During June, July and August, MiEnergy encourages members to reduce energy use between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays. This is done by conserving or by shifting electric use to before 11 a.m. and after 7 p.m. Turn up the thermostat, shift the start of laundry and delay the dishwasher. When demand for electricity is high, costs are high too. Doing the Summer Shift helps keep electric rates stable and affordable.



#### PEAK ALERT

You may occasionally hear a message on the radio from your cooperative, see posts on its social media pages or see a local media story when a Peak Alert is issued. At those times, we encourage our members to take note of the important message and conserve electricity. Normally, there is advanced warning of an hour or two. Members with devices on the co-op’s energy management programs will have them activated.

A Peak Alert is issued when there is high demand for electricity on the regional grid. MiEnergy asks members to conserve electricity from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Elevated peak demand leads to higher power costs. Members can help keep electricity rates stable and affordable by shifting electricity use to after 6 p.m.

#### SUMMER SHIFT VS PEAK ALERT

A Peak Alert is communicated only when necessary and is issued when the electric system is close to experiencing record high demand. MiEnergy asks members to conserve electricity from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. the day the alert is issued.

Both messages help reduce demand. By avoiding peak demand, MiEnergy can potentially save thousands of dollars each year, which in turn, helps keep electric rates affordable for members.

#### MAX GENERATION (MAX GEN) WARNING OR EVENT

If there is a severe imbalance between supply and demand for electricity, a Max Gen Warning is issued by MISO to Dairyland Power and MiEnergy. A warning is just that, a warning that MiEnergy may need to reduce its electric load. Devices on energy management may be activated, and it could happen with little notice. A warning may not advance to an event. A Max Gen Event occurs when there is a shortage of generation resources and the amount of electricity on the grid is critical and may not be able to meet demand. Members should reduce all non-essential electricity use to avoid serious consequences to the grid’s power supply because it could advance to rolling blackouts.

Last June, MISO advanced to a Max Gen Event, and MiEnergy’s members with devices on energy management programs had them activated. However, the event did not escalate to activation of energy management programs outside normal parameters or rolling blackout situations.



rolling blackouts and partial grid failures. Dairyland’s System Operations Center also works closely with MISO to ensure the power grid remains stable and reliable each day.

“Our System Operators are in daily contact with MISO to understand where power needs are and how Dairyland’s resources can best support the regional grid,” Porath said. “We can’t control the weather or other generation resources, but we do take maintenance and

preparedness of our own generation stations as seriously as we do safety.”

“The fact is, we are facing the possibility of power shortages this summer, but participation from members in the Summer Shift program or enrolling an eligible device in our energy management programs can help reduce demand during the highest electricity peaks and aid our ability to keep the lights on and costs under control,” Krambeer said.

## How has MiEnergy prepared for the possibility of rolling blackouts?

While MiEnergy members have never experienced rolling blackouts, the co-op has spent time preparing for the worst-case scenario.

For approximately 20 years, MiEnergy has participated in a yearly table-top exercise led by Dairyland Power Cooperative that creates scenarios for implementing its Emergency Load Reduction Plan (ELRP). It requires that MiEnergy review its plan to know logistically how it would reduce energy use and how it would communicate this to members.

MiEnergy’s plan would require the manual shutdown of substations on a rotational basis. The best case scenario would allow members to know approximately when power would be out and for how long until demand for electricity subsides and returns to normal.

#### WHAT CAN MEMBERS DO?

First, take a look at your electric bill to know what substation is serving you. If MiEnergy needs to make reductions, it will be scheduling shutdowns by substation. Second, check into the cooperative’s energy management programs to see if you are able to participate. These programs automatically pause or shift

electric use of devices in the home. This is always the co-op’s first action to reduce energy use prior to a Max Gen event. Another way to help is to reduce electric use when Peak Alerts are issued. It is a great way to practice energy conservation for times when it is needed most. Lastly, make sure the co-op has your updated phone numbers and email addresses. If the ELRP is implemented, it can happen at any time of day, and the process to shut down substations will happen quickly. Having up-to-date contact information is essential. Members can also look to the co-op’s website and social media pages for updates during a Max Gen event. Keep in mind a Max Gen event is not isolated to MiEnergy or Dairyland Power Cooperative. It will cover utilities in several states within MISO’s footprint.

#### WAYS TO REDUCE ELECTRIC USE:

- Turn off lights, televisions, electronics and other appliances.
- Cook food in a microwave instead of using a stovetop or oven.
- Adjust your thermostat up or down, depending on the season.
- Shift laundry and running the dishwasher.
- Delay electric vehicle charging.







# POWER RESTORATION

## Safety comes first for lineworkers

You can learn a lot about power outages and restoration by watching, from a safe distance of course, a utility crew at work.

The first thing you'll notice is the deliberate, careful pace. They deploy signs to alert motorists. They mark the work area with orange cones. Always in hardhats and fire-protective clothing, anyone working on a power line pulls on heavy rubber gloves and spreads insulating blankets over the wires. Those gloves they pulled on have been tested by a machine that blows air into them to make sure there's not even a pinhole that could allow a deadly electric current to pass through.

And there's more you won't see. That morning, they likely huddled at the back of a truck to discuss what each of them would be doing that day, with an emphasis on safety. It's a best practice in the industry--so common it's often called a "tailgate meeting" or "toolbox talk."

There are a lot of reasons your electricity might go off, with weather by far the leading cause. But to a lineworker, all power outage repairs have one thing in common--safety.

Safety is common sense--people want to get home alive, after all. Line crews attend training aimed at driving home the importance of safety protocols.

The next thing you can learn from watching a line crew at work comes from seeing what task they're doing. There's a good chance they're replacing old equipment. The crew you watch might be restoring an equipment outage, or they

might be switching out an old device to prevent a future outage.

You might see them replacing a downed utility pole, a painstaking process of removing the old and hauling in and raising the new, using trucks specifically designed for the job.

The pole might be down because a motorist ran into it--another cause of outages. Or it could be weather related. Wind, ice, fires--these natural disasters cause about 80% of power outages. One characteristic of those natural disasters is that the damage can be widespread. If

CEO Message, cont. from page 2

sources to maintain reliability and affordability. A resilient and reliable electric grid that affordably keeps the lights on is the cornerstone of the American economy. Families and businesses rightfully expect the lights to stay on at a price they can afford. A diverse energy mix that includes adequate baseload supply is essential to meeting those expectations day in and day out. Dairyland takes this role very seriously.

Incorporating additional renewable energy onto our limited distribution system, while maintaining system reliability, without shifting significant interconnection costs back to the membership is our next challenge. Our current "solar saturation" is limiting new projects and maximizing

one pole is down, lots of others could be as well. It means crews will be repeating the pole-replacement process, one job at a time.

This is why bringing the lights back on after a major storm with widespread outages can take days, or even weeks.

Trees are beautiful but a common cause of outages, as wind and nearby branches can lead to wires getting knocked to the ground. Electric cooperatives devote a lot of time and resources to urging and enforcing limits on planting anything too close to power lines.

One fairly common cause of outages you probably won't learn about by watching a crew make repairs is wildlife. Squirrels and other critters routinely crawl around utility equipment, occasionally making a connection between high-voltage wires. Snakes that slither into an electric substation bring consequences--for them and the utility. Sometimes crews need to investigate and correct the cause. Often the system will reset itself after only a brief power interruption.

Lessons from the lineworkers? Outages can be caused by a variety of factors. Restoring power is an intricate process in a complex utility system. And safety--for crews and the community--will always be the top priority.

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

distribution line loading during periods of limited member energy use. It is evident that allowing all members of the cooperative the opportunity to participate in a distributed generation project, while avoiding special engineering project studies that add cost and delays, seems unavoidable without cooperative direction.

In our pledge to always do better, I am pleased to report that MiEnergy is working to further develop our cooperative direction for incorporating additional renewable energy and electric vehicle charging. We look forward to sharing this information with the membership in the coming months.

As always, I welcome your calls, emails, and personal visits.

# SAFETY TIPS FOR BEFORE, DURING & AFTER THE STORM

Storm season is in full swing. Many summer storms have the potential to produce tornadoes--they can happen anytime, anywhere, and can bring winds over 200 miles per hour.

In April, a video of NBC Washington chief meteorologist Doug Kammerer went viral. During a live broadcast, Kammerer called his teenage son to warn him of a tornado that was headed straight for their home. Knowing the kids were likely playing video games and not paying attention to the weather, he told them to head straight to the basement. Kammerer debated if he should call his family on-air, but he knew it was the right thing to do. Luckily, the kids made it safely through the storm.

As adults, we understand the importance of storm safety, but younger children and teens may not realize the dangers storms pose. That's why it's so important to talk to your family and have a storm plan in place. Here are several tips you can share with your loved ones.

## BEFORE THE STORM

- Talk to your family about what to do in the event of a severe storm or tornado. Point out the safest location to shelter, like a small, interior, windowless room on the lowest level of your home. Discuss the dangers of severe thunderstorms; lightning can strike 10 miles outside of a storm. Remember: when you hear thunder roar, head indoors.
- Make a storm kit. It doesn't have to be elaborate--having a few items on hand is better than nothing at all. Try to include items like water, non-perishable foods, a manual can opener, a First-Aid kit, flashlights and extra batteries, prescriptions, baby supplies and pet supplies. Keep all the items in one place for easy access if the power goes out.

## DURING THE STORM

- Pay attention to local weather alerts--either on the TV, your smartphone or weather radio--and understand the types of alerts. A thunderstorm or tornado watch means these events are possible and you should be prepared; a warning means a thunderstorm or tornado has been spotted in your area and it's time to take action.
- If you find yourself in the path of a tornado, head to your safe place to shelter, and protect yourself by covering your head with your arms or materials like blankets and pillows.
- If you're driving during a severe storm or tornado, do not try to outrun it. Pull over and cover your body with a coat or blanket if possible.

## AFTER THE STORM

- If the power is out, conserve your phone battery as much as possible, limiting calls and texts to let others know you are safe or for emergencies only.
- Stay off the roads if trees, power lines or utility poles are down. Lines and equipment could still be energized, posing life-threatening risks to anyone who gets too close.
- Wear appropriate gear if you're cleaning up storm debris on your property. Thick-soled shoes, long pants and work gloves will help protect you from sharp or dangerous debris left behind.

Summer is a time for many fun-filled activities, but the season can also bring severe, dangerous weather. Talk to your loved ones about storm safety so that everyone is prepared and knows exactly what to do when a storm strikes.

# MiRecipes | Family Favorites

Submit your family's favorite recipe for consideration to be printed in the September 2022 newsletter. Deadline is August 10. Send to Meagan at PO Box 90, Cresco, IA 52136 or email: mmoellers@MiEnergy.coop. MiRecipes will be printed quarterly in this publication. If we publish your recipe, you will receive a \$5 credit on your next electric bill. Limit one recipe published per member annually.

## RHUBARB TORTE | SHERRY BOUSKA, RIDGEWAY

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 2 c. graham cracker crumbs | ¾ c. water                             |
| ¼ c. butter (melted)       | 1½ c. miniature marshmallows           |
| ¼ c. sugar                 | 1 (12 oz. pkg.) Cool Whip              |
| 6 c. rhubarb (diced)       | 2 c. milk                              |
| 3-4 T. cornstarch          | 1 (3 oz. pkg.) instant vanilla pudding |
| 1½ c. sugar                |  |

Mix crumbs, butter, and sugar. Press in 9X13" pan. Bake for 10 minutes. Cool.

Cook rhubarb, cornstarch, sugar and water over low heat until thickened. Cool.

Spread over crust. Fold marshmallows into cool whip. Spread over rhubarb mixture.

Prepare pudding with the 2 cups milk and spread over marshmallows. Chill. Serves 12-15.

## BARBEQUED MEATBALLS | DONNA RUE, RIDGEWAY

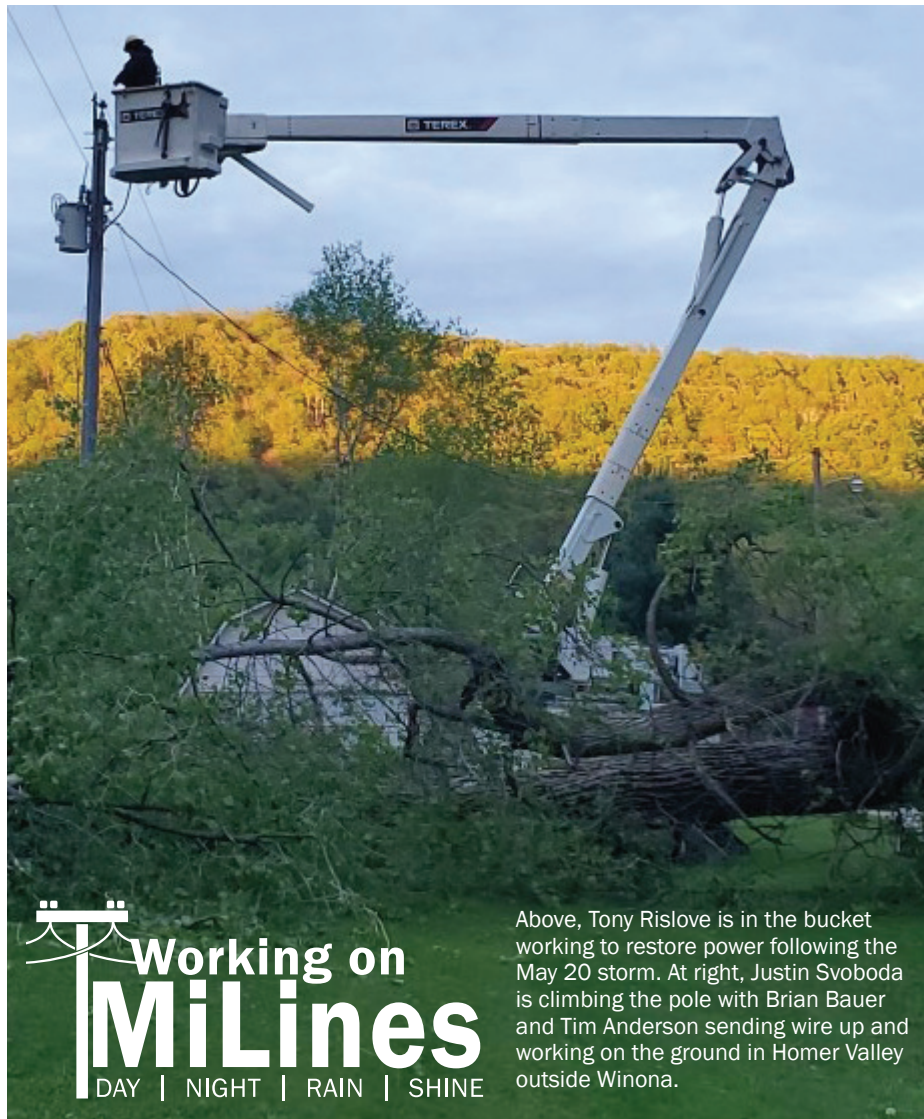
- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 2 lbs. ground beef   | ¼ t. garlic powder |
| ¾ c. milk            | 1 t. salt          |
| 1 c. cracker crumbs  | ¼ t. black pepper  |
| 1 egg                | 1 t. chili powder  |
| ¼ c. onion (chopped) |                    |

Mix together. Shape into balls. Put in 9x13" pan. Makes 12-15 meatballs. Can be frozen.

- Mix sauce:
- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 2 c. ketchup      | ½ t. garlic powder   |
| 1 c. brown sugar  | ¼ c. onion (chopped) |
| ½ t. liquid smoke |                      |

Pour over meatballs. Bake at 350° for one hour.





**Working on  
MiLines**  
DAY | NIGHT | RAIN | SHINE

Above, Tony Rislove is in the bucket working to restore power following the May 20 storm. At right, Justin Svoboda is climbing the pole with Brian Bauer and Tim Anderson sending wire up and working on the ground in Homer Valley outside Winona.



### ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY — RUSHFORD

Employees walked the ditches of Highway 16 near the Rushford office to pick up trash as part of the Adopt-A-Highway program. Pictured L-R: Andy Prinsen, Lori Clobes, Audra Skalet, Kent Whitcomb, Heather Larson, Brittany Benson and Travis Link.



### CAREER EXPLORATION DAY – RUSHFORD-PETERSON

MiEnergy hosted approximately 90 junior and senior high school students as part of the Rushford-Peterson Valley Chamber's Career Exploration Day. R-P students were given a building tour to learn more about the types of jobs available at electric cooperatives. MiEnergy's Steve Oian shows the wire used for power lines to a group of touring students. Students interested in learning more about careers are always welcome to contact the cooperative.



### PRESCHOOL VISIT – CRESCO

Employees visited Notre Dame Catholic School in Cresco. The preschoolers were shown a boom truck in action, and lineworkers demonstrated the safety gear they wear daily. Pictured are MiEnergy lineworkers Zach Steinmetz (left) with his daughter Kylie and Caleb Steiner (right).



**mienergy™**  
COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

#### OFFICE INFORMATION

Open Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
IOWA 24049 Highway 9, PO Box 90, Cresco, IA 52136  
MINNESOTA 31110 Cooperative Way, PO Box 626, Rushford, MN 55971

\*\*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.\*\*

#### PHONE NUMBERS

LOCAL 563-547-3801 (Cresco); 507-864-7783 (Rushford)  
TOLL-FREE & 24/7 OUTAGE REPORTING 800-432-2285  
PAYMENT LINE 24/7 877-853-6517  
UNDERGROUND CABLE LOCATING 811

#### ONLINE

WEBSITE [www.MiEnergy.coop](http://www.MiEnergy.coop)  
SOCIAL MEDIA Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1 Dennis Ptacek, secretary and Jeff Redalen  
DISTRICT 2 Dean Nierling, chair and Ron Stevens, vice chair  
DISTRICT 3 Don Petersen, treasurer, Skip Wieser and Dennis Young  
DISTRICT 4 Kyle Holthaus and Carl Reicks  
DISTRICT 5 Beth Olson and Jenny Scharmer

#### MANAGEMENT STAFF

BRIAN KRAMBEER president/chief executive officer  
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STEVE OIAN vice president of operations - Minnesota  
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MIKE WALTON vice president of operations - Iowa  
KENT WHITCOMB vice president of member services

#### MINEWS STAFF

MEAGAN MOELLERS communications specialist, editor  
ANNIE HOILAND communications specialist  
BRENDA TESCH marketing and communications manager

#### 2022 OFFICES CLOSED

JUL 4 Independence Day  
SEP 5 Labor Day  
SEP 8 Employee Development Day  
NOV 24-25 Thanksgiving Holiday  
DEC 8 Employee Development Day  
DEC 23, 26 Christmas Holiday  
DEC 30 Close at 11:30 a.m. (New Year's Eve observance)

SAVE THE DATE JULY 21 @ 6:30 P.M.

**2021**  
SUSTAINABILITY DASHBOARD  
Improving the Lives of Members

MiEnergy will be hosting a meeting at its Rushford office. Watch for more details in the July issue of MiNews.

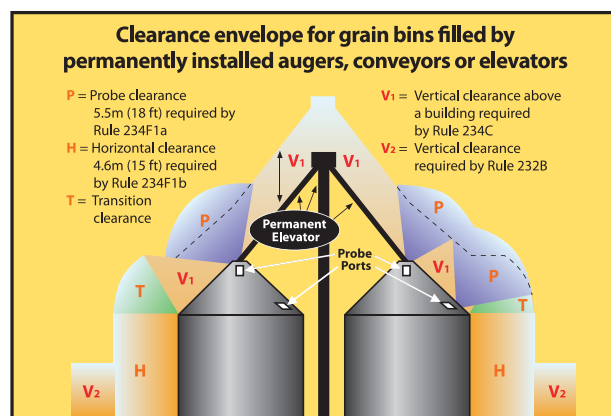
### Grain bin clearance notice for Iowa members

When you start to plan for a new grain bin, please contact MiEnergy. We will provide assistance in planning for a safe environment for everyone working and living around grain bins.

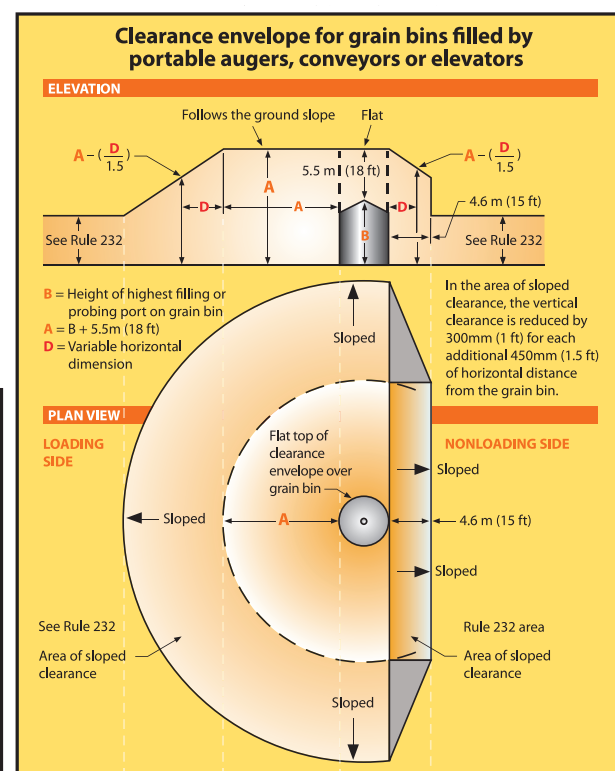
According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in the Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 - 25.2(3) b. An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearances required by The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2012, page 120. "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234f. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after September 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevators built after December 24, 1997. (As adopted by the Iowa Utilities Board)

MiEnergy is required by the Iowa Utilities Board to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants, and city and county zoning officials. If you have any questions concerning clearance regulations, please call MiEnergy at 800-432-2285.

Disclaimer: These drawings are provided as part of Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication. Every care has been taken for the correctness of the contents for these drawings. However, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and its member cooperatives accept no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.



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**American  
Red Cross**

## Blood drive coming to Cresco

MiEnergy Cresco office is hosting an American Red Cross community blood drive on June 17 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. The drive is open to the public.

Appointments are required. Call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) and enter MiEnergy to schedule an appointment.





**Nominate a local volunteer  
and they could win  
\$2,000 for their charity!**

Contest entries accepted during June at  
[IowaShineTheLight.com](http://IowaShineTheLight.com)

## IOWA MEMBERS: Nominate a local volunteer today!

Do you know someone in our community who deserves to be recognized for making a difference? Nominate them for the Shine the Light contest by June 30 and they could win \$2,000 for their local charity or nonprofit.

Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, this contest debuted last year and celebrates the people who make our communities better. Three winners will be announced in September and each will receive a \$2,000 donation for their charity or nonprofit. The winners will also be featured in the September issue of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.

### How to Nominate

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers. If you receive electricity from MiEnergy, you're a co-op member-consumer and we encourage you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer, but does need to reside in Iowa. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.

Go to [www.IowaShineTheLight.com](http://www.IowaShineTheLight.com) by June 30 to make a nomination and to review the contest rules. Nominators will need to provide contact information and answer this question in 500 words or less: How has your nominee made a positive difference in the community and why do they deserve to be recognized?

Help us shine the light on our community volunteers; make a nomination by June 30.

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MiEnergy will be conducting a member satisfaction survey starting Monday, June 20. The phone and email survey will randomly select co-op members. MiEnergy hired a third-party independent research group, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Market Research Services, to conduct a confidential survey with co-op members. If you are contacted, we strongly encourage you to take the short survey. We appreciate your time and input because your feedback helps us discover ways to better serve you.

FILL YOUR SUMMER WITH MEMORIES!

## SEE YOU AT THE IOWA COUNTY FAIRS

MiEnergy is sponsoring the following contests.

Entries are judged on appearance, taste and texture.

Prizes: 1st Place - \$25; 2nd Place - \$15; 3rd Place - \$10

### HOWARD COUNTY FAIR, JUNE 22-26

Featherlite Center at the Howard County Fairgrounds

#### Homemade Salsa Contest

- Judging at 12 p.m. on Wednesday, June 22.
- Entry Times: 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

One pint per entry. Limit of two entries per individual. Chips will be furnished.

#### Strawberry Dessert Contest

- Judging at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, June 22.
- Entry Times: 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Must be in a disposable container. Limit of two entries per individual.

#### Light Bulb Decorating Contest

- Judging on Thursday, June 23.
- Entry Times: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. on Wednesday, June 22.

Open to kids 12 years of age and under. Each child entering will receive a new LED light bulb. Entries picked up between 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 26.



### WINNESHIEK COUNTY FAIR JULY 12-16

Fontanelle Shelter at the Winneshiek County Fairgrounds

#### Homemade Apple Pie Contest

- Judging at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, July 12.
  - Entry Times: 10:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.
- Please use disposable pie tins for entries. Limit of two entries per family.

#### Chocolate Chip Cookie Contest

- Judging at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, July 12.
  - Entry Times: 10:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.
- Any type of chocolate chip cookie allowed. One dozen cookies on a disposable plate or tray per entry.